

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of navigating and retrieving pictures in a picture database comprising the steps of:

 providing a first display dimension representing a first characteristic of grouped pictures;

 providing a second display dimension representing a second characteristic of grouped pictures;

 providing a third display dimension representing a third characteristic of grouped pictures; and

 providing in the manner of a scatter plot, a plurality of picture icons plotted according to a first dimension along a first axis corresponding to said first display dimension, and a second dimension along a second axis corresponding to said second display dimension, each picture icon representing a group of pictures in a picture database;

 wherein said third dimension is evidenced by distinct visual characteristics of said icons.

2. The method in Claim 1, wherein said first, second and third dimensions for a group of pictures represented by an icon are determined by metadata stored with picture data in the picture database.

3. The method in Claim 1, wherein said first, second and third dimensions correspond to picture characteristics stored in the form of metadata, and said first, second and third axes are configurable by a user to represent specific picture characteristics from a plurality of picture characteristic choices.

4. The method in Claim 1, wherein said first, second and third dimensions and axes are dynamically linked, so that a changes in one dimension automatically updates one or more other dimensions.

5. The method in Claim 1, wherein said groups of pictures are pictures in a common filmstrips.

6. The method in Claim 1, wherein said third dimension is evidenced by color differences in said icon.

7. The method in Claim 1, wherein the number of gradations in said third dimension are determinable by a user.

8. The method in Claim 1, wherein said picture characteristics comprise one or more identifiable persons in pictures.

9. The method in Claim 1, wherein said picture characteristics comprise one or more identifiable objects in pictures.

10. The method in Claim 1, wherein said picture characteristics comprise one or more identifiable events associated with pictures.

11. The method in Claim 1, wherein said picture characteristics comprise temporal picture capture information.

12. The method in Claim 11, wherein said temporal picture capture information comprises the date of capture.

13. The method in Claim 11, wherein said temporal picture capture information comprises the time of day of capture.

14. The method in Claim 1, wherein said picture characteristics comprise one or more identifiable capture locations associated with pictures.

15. The method in Claim 1, wherein said picture characteristics comprise one or more predefined explanatory comments.

16. A graphical user interface adapted to navigate and retrieve pictures in a picture database, said graphical user interface (GUI) comprising:

a first display dimension generator adapted to generate a first display dimension representing a first characteristic of grouped pictures;

a second display dimension generator adapted to generate a second display dimension representing a second characteristic of grouped pictures;

a third display dimension generator adapted to generate a third display dimension representing a third characteristic of grouped pictures; and

an icon generator adapted to generate in the manner of a scatter plot, a plurality of picture icons plotted according to a first dimension along a first axis corresponding to said first display dimension, and a second dimension along a second axis corresponding said second display dimension, each picture icon representing a group of pictures in a picture database;

wherein said third dimension is evidenced by distinct visual characteristics of said icons.

17. The GUI in Claim 16, wherein said first, second and third dimensions for a group of pictures represented by an icon are determined by metadata stored with picture data in the picture database.

18. The GUI in Claim 16, wherein said first, second and third dimensions correspond to picture characteristics stored in the form of metadata, and said first, second and third axes are configurable by a user to represent specific picture characteristics from a plurality of picture characteristic choices.

19. The GUI in Claim 16, wherein said first, second and third dimensions and axes are dynamically linked, so that a changes in one dimension automatically updates one or more other dimensions and axes.

20. The GUI in Claim 16, wherein said groups of pictures are pictures in a common filmstrips.

21. The GUI in Claim 16, wherein said third dimension is evidenced by color differences in said icon.

22. The GUI in Claim 16, wherein the number of gradations in said third dimension are determinable by a user.

23. The GUI in Claim 16, wherein said picture characteristics comprise one or more identifiable persons in pictures.

24. The GUI in Claim 16, wherein said picture characteristics comprise one or more identifiable objects in pictures.

25. The GUI in Claim 16, wherein said picture characteristics comprise one or more identifiable events associated with pictures.

26. The GUI in Claim 16, wherein said picture characteristics comprise temporal picture capture information.

27. The GUI in Claim 26, wherein said temporal picture capture information comprises the date of capture.

28. The GUI in Claim 26, wherein said temporal picture capture information comprises the time of day of capture.

29. The GUI in Claim 16, wherein said picture characteristics comprise one or more identifiable capture locations associated with pictures.

30. The GUI in Claim 16, wherein said picture characteristics comprise one or more predefined explanatory comments.